

GOVERNOR GRETCHEN WHITMER

SUPPORTING RURAL COMMUNITIES



Governor Whitmer has been laser-focused on the kitchen-table fundamental issues that matter most to rural families, communities, and small businesses. She has made investments to make childcare more affordable, housing more attainable, and high-speed internet more accessible. As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Whitmer is committed to creating good-paying jobs and building up transportation and water infrastructure in every community.

ECONOMY

- Creation of the Office of Rural Development: Governor Whitmer created the Office of Rural Development to address the unique challenges that face rural communities.
- Signed an FY 22 budget that invested millions into farm innovation projects and community revitalization and placemaking grants to support economic development in communities.



"Hardworking rural communities make immeasurable contributions to our economy and are an integral part of Michigan's culture. We have to help them thrive by investing in high-quality infrastructure, high-speed internet, affordable childcare, attainable housing, and economic development."

- Governor Gretchen Whitmer

HIGH-SPEED INTERNET

- Set a state goal to provide 100% access to high-speed internet and 95% adoption by households during the next five years, while continually investing in higher quality access.
- Invested \$28 million through the Connecting Michigan Communities Grant Program in three rounds of grants to expand service to 18,900 homes and businesses.
- \$363 million through the FCC's Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Auction. Secured more funding per capita through than any other state.
- \$32.6 million through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's ReConnect Program.
- \$5.3 million through the FCC's COVID-19 Telehealth Grant Program.
- Signed the Broadband Expansion Act of Michigan, codifying the Connecting Michigan Communities Grant Program, a grant program to fill internet access gaps in underserved communities.
- Signed an Executive Directive creating the Michigan High-Speed Internet Office to coordinate the state's high-speed internet work and align the work with economic development opportunities.

ROADS, BRIDGES, HOUSING, AND WATER

- Launched the Rebuilding Michigan Plan, a \$3.5 billion bond plan that expands hundreds of major new road projects, building up our state highways and bridges over the next 5 years, without an increase at the pump. The projects support 22,800 jobs.
- Invested \$196 million to repair or replace 100 local bridges in serious or critical condition, creating 2,500 jobs.
- Created the Food and Agricultural Housing Task Force to address the impediment housing has had on rural economic development.
- Proposed a \$100 million investment to expand access to affordable, attainable housing.
- Launched MI Clean Water, a \$500 million drinking and wastewater infrastructure plan supporting 7,500 good-paying jobs to address high water rates, lead-laden water service lines, toxic contaminants like PFAS, sewers that can't meet demand, and failing septic systems.
- In addition to MI Clean Water, invested millions in drinking water, stormwater, and waste water facilities across the state supporting thousands of local jobs.
- Invested the largest amount in history to reduce agricultural pollution in the Great Lakes, and increased funding to local conservation districts and farmers for implementation of conservation practices.

CHILDCARE, EDUCATION, AND SKILLS

- Signed a record \$1.4 billion investment in federal childcare funding
 - Expanded access to low or no-cost childcare for 105,000 more working families earning less than \$49,025 for a family of four.
 - Expands access to childcare statewide by keeping childcare open and helping providers expand to communities without enough childcare.
- Made the largest investment in PreK-12 schools in state history—without raising taxes.
 - Closed the funding gap between schools, ensuring every school district has the same baseline funding: \$8,700 per student.
 - Expanded access to mental health professionals, including school counselors and psychologists, to support students' comprehensive recovery.
 - Prioritized equity in state funding by dedicating more state resources to students with the highest needs, including more funding for at-risk, English language learners, and special education in the FY 20, 21, and 22 budgets.
 - Increased funding for small, rural, and isolated school districts by \$1.4 million, bringing total added funding to \$8.4 million.
- Created and fully funded the bipartisan Michigan Reconnect and Futures for Frontliners programs to provide a tuition-free path to a degree or skill certificate for Michiganders ages 25 and up.

HEALTH

- Extended Healthy Michigan to nearly 900,000 people.
- Expanded access to telemedicine and signed bipartisan legislation requiring all insurers to cover telehealth.
- Proposed the MI Healthy Communities Plan to invest \$20 million in telemedicine infrastructure support to build, equip, and operate secure rooms to access telehealth services and \$335 million to increase capacity for community-based behavioral health and substance use disorder treatments.
- Established Prescription Drugs Task Force and received their recommendations to drive down costs, promote transparency, and improve health outcomes.
- Signed bipartisan legislation to protect Michiganders against surprise medical billing.
- Established the Michigan Opioids Task Force and secured \$80 million in federal funding to support prevention, treatment, and harm-reduction services to combat the ongoing opioid crisis.
- Secured a \$2.5 million grant to support Michigan's rural healthcare workers and employees and address staffing shortages during COVID-19.
- Secured a \$13 million grant to support COVID-19 testing and mitigation, including education, contact tracing, communication, and outreach, to 51 small, rural hospitals.
- Secured funding to respond to mental stress and fatigue of Michigan farmers and agricultural workers and their families.

AGRICULTURE

- Invested \$15M into the Michigan Agricultural Safety Grant Program and Small Farm Safety Grant Programs to support farmers and food processors during COVID-19.
- Took action to open the hemp market to Michigan's producers, bringing a new commodity to Michigan's diverse agricultural market.
- Requested federal relief and signed a bill authorizing \$15M in loans for farmers reeling from crop loss and damage during one of the wettest years in state history.